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mission fields at home

Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

Red Lion and Knights Roads
Philadelphia 14, Pa.
September-October, 1961

. . . dedicated

FEAR WAR UNREST Hatred Disunity SEGREGATION strife

On August 8, 1961 newspapers carried headlines highlighting the unrest and disunity in the world—fear, war, hatred, segregation—in a world which longs for the peace of unity.

On August 8, 1961 in the Motherhouse chapel of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Cornwells Heights, Pa. ten young sisters made first profession of vows in an American congregation dedicated to the cause of unity.

These Sisters portrayed in a concrete way the life and spirit of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament founded by Mother Katharine Drexel 70 years ago.

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to UNITY

through the Blessed Sacrament

"The unity of the Mystical Body" is the purpose of the Holy Eucharist. "The unity of the Mystical Body" is the goal of these Sisters dedicated to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in their service of the Indians and Colored People.

There are 18,000,000 Negroes in the U.S.A. There are 537,000 Indians in this country. Through education, home visitation and social service work almost 600 SBS missioners are dedicated to their unity in Christ.

The ten sisters professed on August 8 in themselves portray the unity to which they are dedicated, for there are among them members of the three main races of the world —Negro, Oriental, Caucasian.

70 years of missionary service have produced many fruits. Certainly the culmination of all is to see within the family of the church more and more evidence that "we though many are one Body, all of us who partake of the one bread."

The sisters pictured above are left to right:

Sr. M. Brian (Long Island, N.Y.)
Sr. M. Colette (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Sr. M. Zita (Bethlehem, Pa.)
Sr. M. Sebastian (Long Island, N.Y.)
Sr. M. Eric (Worcester, Mass.)
Sr. M. Jeannette (Brockton, Mass.)
Sr. M. Victor (Parker, Arizona)
Sr. M. Clovis (Long Island, N.Y.)
Sr. M. Roland (New Orleans, La.)
Sr. M. Alverna (Cincinnati, O.)

home mission

Sr. Mary of the Holy Family and a few of the devoted workers at St. Peter Claver mission in Iowa, La.

Many and varied are the places where an S.B.S. catechist spreads the message of Christ. The fourth floor classroom in a Harlem school! The back yard of a Philadelphia home! The hogan of the Arizona desert! The bayou banks of Louisiana!

The home mission catechist, dedicated to the service of the Negro and Indian, spends after school and week-end hours during the school year teaching the word of God to those who have not come under her care during the school day. When schools close in June, activities in catechetics multiply. S.B.S. catechists find themselves in many out-of-the-way places where the lack of religious training pleads for their missionary service.

From Sacred Heart School in Lake Charles, Louisiana this summer, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament went to an outlying mission in Iowa, Louisiana and to Immaculate Heart Parish in the city. Right at Sacred Heart School, itself, a religion class drew many public school children for instruction.

Pictured here are a few views of S.B.S. catechists this past summer "bringing the news of Christ" in the Lake Charles, Louisiana area.

Sr. Margaret Clare and Sr. Francis of Assisi assemble the public school children for instructions at Sacred Heart, Lake Charles.

Teaching catechism outdoors at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lake Charles —Sr. Marie Assunta.

catechists

Down the grandstands at Immaculate Heart Mission . . . Sr. M. Helena and part of her group after catechism lessons.

Sr. Marie Canisius draws a group of children about her as she begins her catechism lesson for the day at Iowa, Louisiana.

X. U. Graduate—

roving AMBASSADOR

ACCRA, Ghana

If anyone ever gets around to striking an "unofficial Roving American Ambassador of Good Will" medal, then certainly Leo P. Sam should be one of its first recipients.

For this personable, 31-year-old Negro from Beaumont, Texas, has spent months in exhaustive travel throughout the length and breadth of 16 African nations. His purpose: to lay the groundwork for this year's operation of one of America's most highly respected and successful people-to-people friendship programs.

OPERATIONS CROSSROADS

Called "Operation Crossroads Africa," this privately sponsored project, whose goal is the strengthening of the bonds of friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and Africa, was established in 1958 by Dr. James H. Robinson, New York Negro pastor.

During the summer of that year, 60 American college students were recruited and dispatched to five African countries where, working manually side-by-side with African students, they constructed roads, schools, dispensaries, reservoirs — and anything else that needed building in or near the remote villages where they lived and worked.

Condensed from an article by

Mike Mahoney

Atlanta Constitution Correspondent

The program proved so successful and popular that it was rapidly expanded in the next few years. According to Sam (who was appointed field director of "Operation Crossroads Africa" in December, 1960) 210 students planned to arrive in Africa on their 1961 summer "vacations" to carry on the magnificient work of their predecessors. Thirty-four of them, including 10 girls, were assigned to Ghana, while the rest were distributed among 15 other nations.

PERSUADES AFRICANS

It was Sam's responsibility this year to persuade as many African leaders as possible to allow "Crossroads" to work in their respective countries, and, once they had agreed, to make sure they made adequate preparations to receive the students. Once the "Crossroaders" had arrived and begun their work in the 16 countries that agreed to accept them, it was Sam's job to see to it that all went well with them while they remained in Africa.

This stupendous task required him to be constantly on the hop back and forth among 16 nations interested, with many long and tedious trips into the hinterlands to visit his charges in their isolated villages.

This may seem like a mighty tall order for a man so young yet it must be remembered that after all, he is a Texan. On top of that, he already could be considered something of an "old Africa hand," having served for two years in Senegal and Mali with the Catholic Relief Services. Prior to that he put in a short stint with the United Nations in New York.

EDUCATED AT XAVIER

Sam was educated by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament at Xavier University in New Orleans, La., and then went on to do graduate work in international relations at New York University and Cambridge University in England. He married his hometown sweetheart (a schoolteacher) last December and brought his attractive bride along with him to Africa.

To say that Sam is proud of the students under his care would be putting it mildly. He is particularly proud, and rightfully so, of the fact that they come from colleges and universities in all parts of the United States. Furthermore they represent a multitude of races and creeds for among them are whites, Negroes, Chinese, Filipinos, Mexicans and an Indian.

That the dedicated and selfless efforts of Leo P. Sam and his "Crossroaders" have been welcomed is best illustrated by the "farewell address" which was delivered to a group of last year's "Crossroaders" by the chief of the Nigerian village of Akugbene.

He said:

"We deeply appreciate your association with us in which our foreshore wall embankment has been completed.

"During your stay you so identified yourselves with us that we regarded you as members of our Akugbene community.

"You have since your stay endured to put up with the uncomfortable lodgings we provided, you submitted yourselves to care for the health of our children; you took the trouble to conduct outdoor classes with our children.

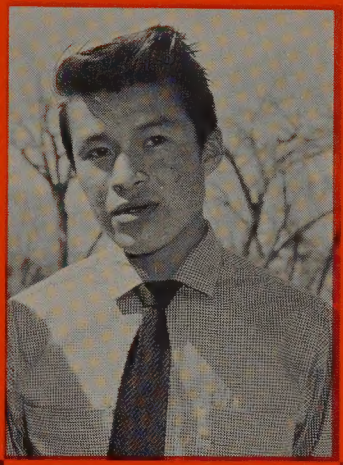
"How lonesome shall we feel in your absence from our town, Akugbene, when we shall no more cast our eyes upon American dances and ways of life."

BALL GAME

Every nook and corner of St. Michael Boarding School seemed to be alive with excitement. The ball game! The ball game! That was the word. In the bakery the girls hurried through chores. In the kitchen there was great bustling. Even on the playground the little ones chattered about the big game. Little girls mimiced their big sisters as they practiced cheers and the boys performed in the style of their high school heroes. The excitement was contagious. I couldn't wait for evening to come.

After the supper dishes were washed we went over to the gym. Going out into the darkness it seemed that the school was in the middle of nowhere. No lights were visible for miles. I almost expected to

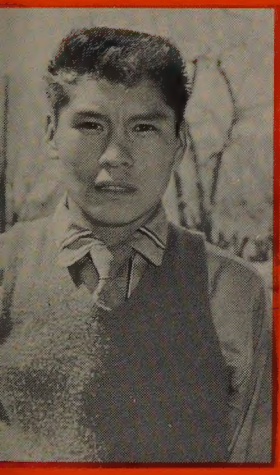
St. Michael Indian Boarding School on the Navajo reservation has been conducted and maintained by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament since 1902. The grammar and high schools provide an education for the Navaho youth of the reservation as well as for members of a number of other Indian tribes.



Lawrence Mahle
from Tewa

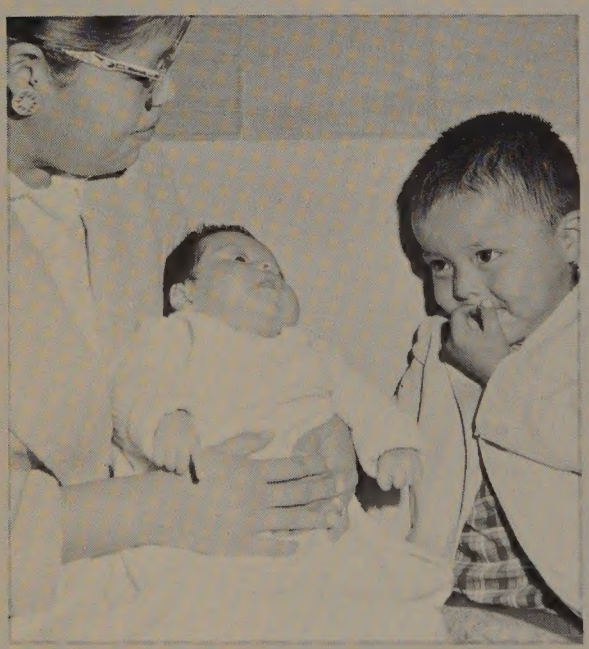
"Sister Patrice,"
are you rooting for."

Mary Brown and
Sister Anthony Marie
talk over the
score



Another Tewa player
Emil Honie

Future
cheer leaders:

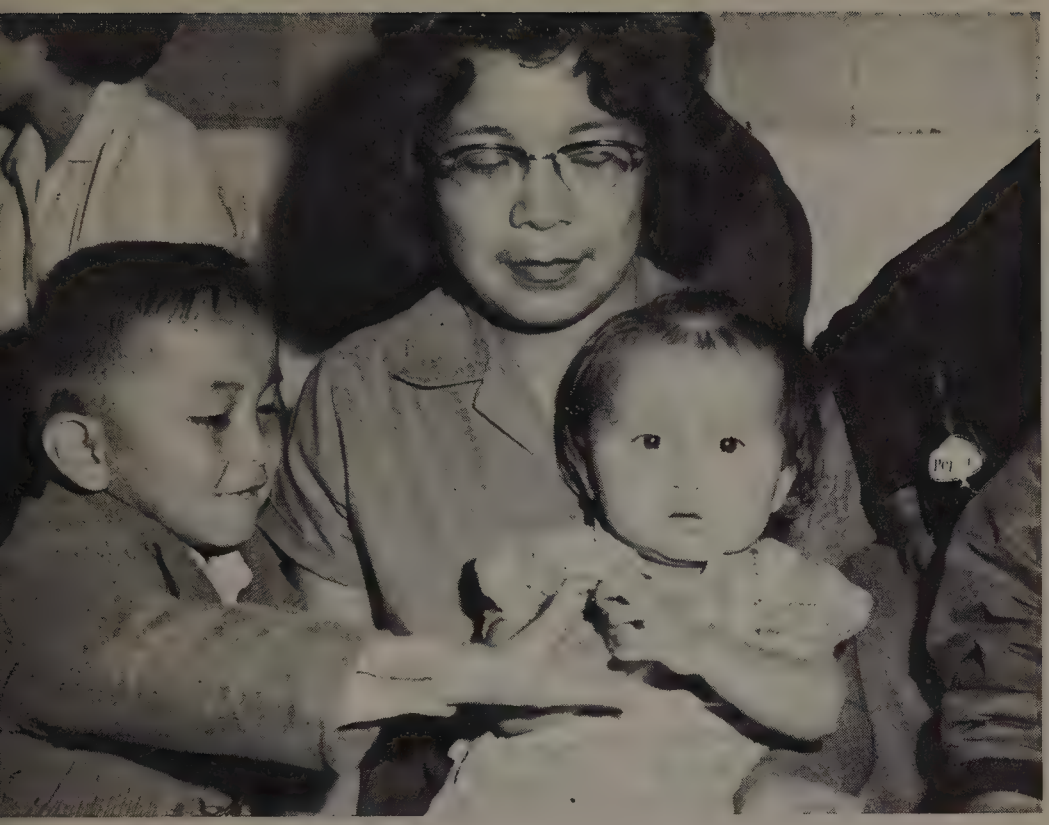


Above: Sister Kateri with St. Michael's boosters. Janie Mitchell, Shirley Freeland, Carol Kirk, Caroline Bitsui, Sharon Kirk and Grace Keedo

Below: No babysitter needed. — Everybody comes to the game

Above: The boys give Sister Lawrence the lineup for the game

Below: Sr. Marie Therese and Rose Myers wonder if he'll get it in the basket.



There is no age limit in the cheering section.

hear the clatter of horses' hoofs ringing through the night air. Then suddenly beams of light cut strange patterns in the darkness as pickup trucks and cars came from all directions on the reservation. Evidently this ball game was not just a school event. It was a community activity.

With that wonderful spirit, so characteristic of the Navaho Indian, whole families turned out to cheer the boys to victory. This was an inter-tribal basketball game and stalwart Navaho warriors, lightning-fast Hopis and intrepid Pueblo braves battled it out with ball and net.

High school girls in picturesque costume led the hearty cheers coming from the stands.

Small boys carried water to thirsty players and sold pop to spectators. It was a gala evening for all.

Who won the game? What was the score? I don't know. I was too busy watching the all American audience to pay any attention to the all American game.

Sr. M. Gemma helps with a reading lesson on the front steps

Southern Missions

by Sr. M. Maurice, S.B.S.

If you were to watch the congregation of St. Peter Claver Parish in Macon, Georgia, it might not seem to you different from that of any other small parish. Its parishioners represent a typical cross section of society with its small group of professional men, a large portion of hourly wage earners and some very poor people. But St. Peter Claver is different from an ordinary parish because it is a MISSION. Its field of operation takes in the Negro population of Macon where only one out of every 216 persons is a Catholic.

The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament went to Macon in 1915 and opened the school to 170 Negro children. The missioners found themselves faced with bigotry on all sides. The bigotry of those who opposed any education for the Negro but particularly Catholic education! And the unthinking bigotry of an illiterate Negro population not intellectually prepared to accept Catholic doctrine! Conversions were few and the preparation of the ground work was to take decades.

The need for sound education made the school the most practical missionary task. The Sisters found

their efforts with the children a fruitful means of bringing families into the church.

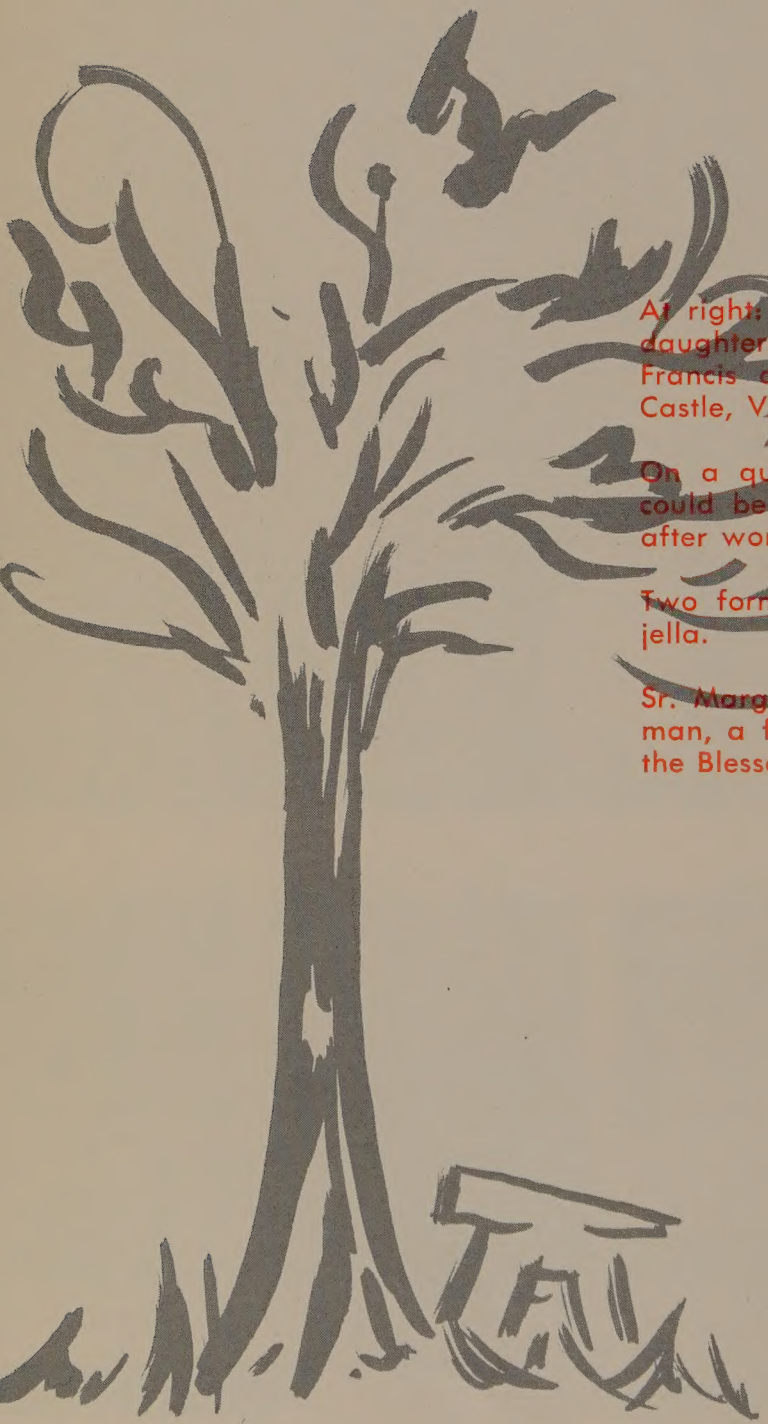
Even in those early years parents, eager to improve the lot of their children, made sacrifices to send their daughters to St. Francis de Sales High School which was conducted by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Rock Castle, Virginia. Returning to Macon these Castle graduates were a leaven of Catholicity in a predominantly non-Catholic community. One Castle-ite, Mrs. Eva Williams Lundy, has been awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal for her apostolic activity in the parish.

The change-over from an agricultural to an industrial South has had an influence on Macon. Large housing projects have brought the people closer together. The children, freed from the necessity of helping with farm work, attend school more regularly and the literacy rate has improved.

Each year there is increasing evidence that the patient work of the last 50 years was not in vain. In 1959 the Dioceses of Georgia reported a total of 2,028 Negro Catholics with 1,689 children in Catholic schools. Two years later in 1961 the total Negro Catholic population reached 9,234 with 4,020 children in Catholic schools. This annually increasing growth will perhaps be spurred by the recent statement of the Georgia bishops in which they announced that "integration into the main stream of Catholic life is the only right and ultimate goal to work for among Negroes."

Dr. Nixon and his family

Home visitation in Macon

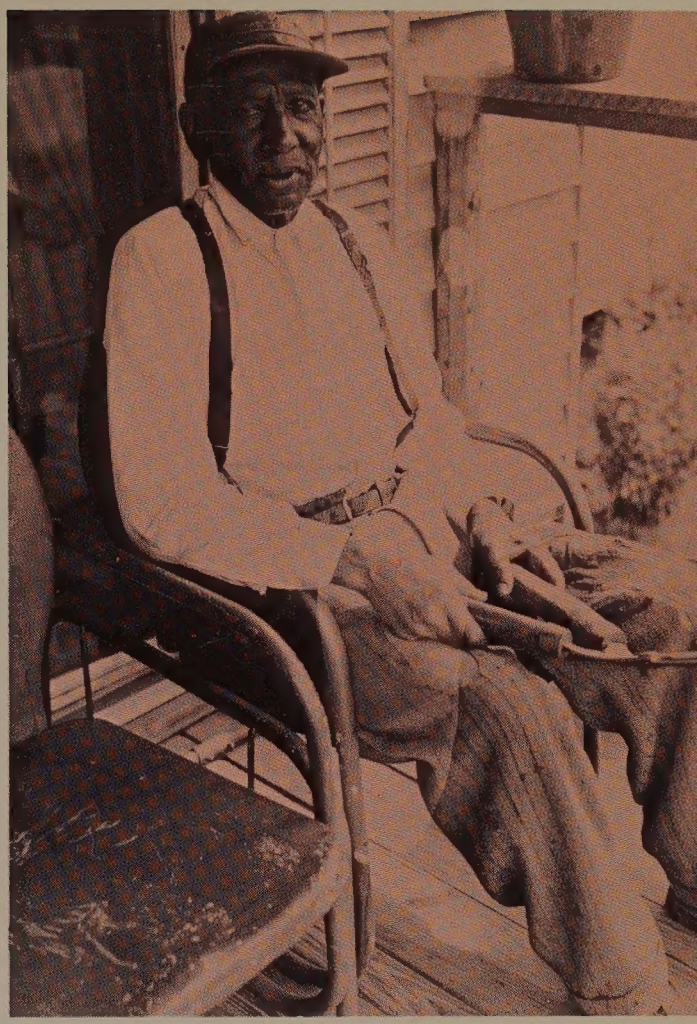


At right: Dr. Martin of Macon and his daughter who formerly attended St. Francis de Sales High School in Rock Castle, Virginia.

On a quiet afternoon in Macon what could be more pleasant than relaxing after working in the garden.

Two former Castle-ites with Sister Majella.

Sr. Margaret Patricia with Jackie Boatman, a faithful friend of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for many years.



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